What Takes a Person Out of the Sunnah

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What Takes a Person Out of the Sunnah

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

All praises are for Allāh, Lord of all the worlds. May He send peace and blessings upon our beloved Prophet and Messenger Muhammad bin 'Abdullah, his family, his pure wives, his Companions and everybody that follows them in goodness until the Day of Judgment. I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship in truth except Allāh alone without any partners or equals, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and final Messenger ﷺ.

Dear reader, I ask Allāh to bless and bestow His mercy upon you. The book you have between your hands seeks to clarify the principles that, if opposed, render one outside of the fold of the Sunnah. The author of the book also details the difference between the general ruling concerning the one who opposes a principle from the principles of *Ahlus-Sunnah wal Jamā'ah* in contrast to applying the ruling upon a specific person. The author presents various statements from the scholars, old and new highlighting the magnitude of this important topic.

Not only does this book emphasise the enormous importance of adhering to the correct methodology, it also serves as a reminder of the severity of unjustly declaring someone to be outside of the fold of the Sunnah. What further compliments the status of this book are the forewords by two prestigious and well recognised scholars from the Prophet's city, Madinah; Dr. Sālih bin Sa'd as-

Suhaymī and Dr. Sulaymān bin Saleemullah ar-Ruhaylī, may Allāh protect and preserve them both. It was thought that this topic was of the utmost importance especially in our day and age where issues pertaining to *takfeer* (declaring people to be outside the fold of Islām), *tabdi'* (declaring people to be innovators) are rampant, and few are those who actually study and learn these sensitive issues, yet many are those who delve into them, writing and speaking about them. Many have experienced first-hand the ill effects of this distasteful trend and lowly behaviour that has emerged, consisting of mental bullying, unwarranted abandonment, name-calling, malicious lies, and being unjustifiably labelled as a deviant.

I would like to humbly thank my brother AbdulHaq al-Ashanti for introducing me to this book and kindly taking the time to review the first edit. I am also obliged to thank Tāhir Wyatt for the encouragement and patience he displayed during the many hours we spent together going over the second edit. In addition, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my brothers 'Abdul Hakeem Wilson and 'Abdul Wahhāb Faulk for reading over the book prior to its release and offering their suggestions. Though countless hours have gone into bringing this translation to fruition and making it error free, it is still subject to human frailty. I take full responsibility for any mistakes that remain and welcome your correspondence. I am also obliged to thank my beloved father, Abu Ismā'eel 'Esa Beaumont, who generously agreed to cover the cost of the publication of this book. Last but not least, I beseech Allāh, the Lord of the Glorious Throne, to

immensely reward the author of the original Arabic script, Shaykh Ahmad an-Najjār.

My methodology in translating the book was to ensure that the fidelity of the original book was observed whilst maintaining transparency in the writing style. Far too often when Arabic books are translated into English, there are remnants of the Arabic language in the translation thus making the read somewhat difficult. The English reader was kept in mind at all times and no effort was spared to render the translation as readable as possible. An index has been added at the end of the book, which allows the reader to easily locate any Quranic *āyāt* or statement from the scholars that appeared in the book. Finally, a glossary containing a list of important Islamic terminologies has been provided and can be used as a reference point.

I ask Allāh the Mighty and Majestic to make this small effort sincere, seeking His Noble Face and that He, the Most High causes it to be benefit for Islām and the Muslims. Surely, He is Ever-Capable over all things.

The poor servant in need of his Lord's Mercy and Forgiveness

Abu Zakariyyah Ismā'eel bin 'Esa Beaumont
Al-Madinah an-Nabawiyyah
Wednesday 11th February 2015
22nd Rabī'uth-Thāni 1436H

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

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الحمد لله والصلاة والسلام على رسول الله وبعد:
فقد قرأت البحث المبارك الذي كتبه أخونا الشيخ أحمد بن محمد النجار
والموسوم "تبصير الخلف بضابط الأصول التي من خالفها خرج عن
منهج السلف" فألفيته بحثاً قيماً نافعاً مبنياً على هدي
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في غاية الأهمية ولا يستغني عنها طالب علم لذلك أوصي
بنشره للإفادة منه وبخاصة بين طلاب العلم أسأل الله
أن يجعله خالصاً لوجهه وأن ينفع به الإسلام والمسلمين

أملاه الفقير لعفو ربه
صالح بن سعد السحيمي
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Foreword by the Noble Shaykh Dr. Sālih bin Sa'd as-Suhaymī

All praises are due to Allāh, and may His peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allāh.

To proceed:

I read this blessed research which was written by our brother Shaykh Ahmad bin Muhammad an-Najjār entitled: *Enlightening the Successor about the Principles (Usūl) which if Opposed Renders a Person Outside of the Salafi Manhaj.*[1] I found it to be a valuable, beneficial research paper based on the guidance of the Book, Sunnah and in agreement with the methodology of the *Salaf* of the Ummah.

The *usūl* mentioned by the author are of the utmost importance and are from those affairs that the student of knowledge cannot do without. With that, I advise that this book be spread and benefitted from, specifically among the students of knowledge.

[1] [Editor's Note]: It was suggested that the original translated title of the book be amended from '*What Takes A Person Out of Salafiyyah*' to '*What Takes A Person Out of the Sunnah*' as the words *Salafiyyah* and Sunnah are synonymous. This was done after consulting the author of the book and obtaining his permission, and to Allāh belongs all praise.

We ask Allāh to make this work sincerely seeking His Face and that He benefits Islām with it and the Muslims.

The one in need of his Lord's Pardon

Sālih bin Sa'd as-Suhaymī
26th Muharram 1432 AH

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الحمد لله وحده والصلاة والسلام على من لا نبي بعده وبعد

فإن السلفية لها معنى نقي طاهر وبها صلاح الباطن والظاهر وفيها تحقيق حق خالق الخلق والرحمة بالخلق فهي نعمة كلها وخير كلها ورحمة كلها وعدل كلها فو الله إن السلفية فيها الخير للأفراد والمجتمعات وفيها الأمن بأنواعه أمن القلوب وأمن الأفراد وأمن المجتمعات والأمن على الضروريات ، وهي منهج بيِّن بذاته منضبط بأصوله فمن تسمى بها عرضناه عليها فمن صدقته فهو الصادق المهتدي ومن كذبته فهو الكاذب المفتري ، ومما ينبغي إدراكه وفهمه أن السلفية هي السلفية فمن قيدها بقيد كقولهم سلفية جهادية فقف عند ذلك القيد فستجد خللا في التصور ومخالفة للأصول دعت إلى ذلك القيد ، وما أحوج الناس اليوم إلى معرفة السلفية الحقة والتزامها في زمن اختلطت فيه المفاهيم وأصبح ينسب إلى السلف ما لا يُعرَف عنهم ولا تقبله أصولهم ، وتطاول أناس على السلفية اغترارا بدعاوى أولئك ، ومن هنا تبرز أهمية بيان أصول السلف الثابتة وإبرازها للناس ، ومن ذلك هذا البحث الذي أعده أخونا أحمد محمد الصادق النجار وسماه (تبصير الخلف بالأصول التي من خالفها خرج عن منهج السلف) وهو بحث نافع في بابه اهتم بالكليات حسب تقرير العلماء الأعلام فينبغي فهمه على ذلك وعدم الاشتغال بتأويله وما صرف كثيرا من الناس عن الاستفادة من كثير من الحق إلا تأويله وحمله على غير وجهه

أسأل الله أن ينفع بهذا البحث ويجمع القوب على الهدى والسنة ويجنبنا والمسلمين البدع وشر الفتن ما ظهر منها وما بطن

والله من وراء القصد وصلى الله وسلم على نبينا محمد وآله وصحبه أجمعين ومن تبعهم بإحسان إلى يوم الدين

كتبه

د . سليمان بن سليم الله الرحيلي

أستاذ الدراسات العليا المشارك بكلية الشريعة بالجامعة الإسلامية

Foreword by the Noble Shaykh, Dr. Sulaymān bin Saleemullah ar-Ruhaylī

All praises are due to Allāh, and may His peace and blessings be upon he whom after him is no other Prophet.

To proceed:

Salafiyyah[2] has a meaning that is clear and pure; by way of it, internal and external righteousness is achieved. *Salafiyyah* fulfils the rights of the Creator and includes mercy toward the creation. It is absolute goodness, mercy, justice, and a complete blessing. By Allāh, *Salafiyyah* is good for the individual and for societies, and is inclusive of every aspect of security: security of the hearts, individuals, communities and essentials [for existence]. It is a *manhaj* (methodology) that is clear in and of itself, precise in its *usūl* (principles). Therefore, whoever claims to be *Salafi* is measured in accordance to *Salafiyyah's usūl*. If he believes and acts in accordance to its *usūl*, then he is truthful and guided, and if not, he is a liar and a fabricator.

Something that should be understood is that *Salafiyyah* is *Salafiyyah* [i.e. it does not need any additional clause]! Hence, whenever a description is added to it, such as those who say

[2] [Editor's Note]: *Salafiyyah* and Sunnah are two synonymous terms.

“*Salafiyyah Jihadiyyah*”, we have to stop and look at the addition. You will find that they have only added that clause because of a deficiency in their perception of *Salafiyyah* and opposition to its *usūl*. People today are in great need of understanding true *Salafiyyah* and adhering to it in a time when people’s understandings have become mixed up and confused. There are things that are ascribed to the *Salaf* which, in reality, are unknown from them and are unacceptable according to their *usūl*. These foreign practices being carried out in the name of *Salafiyyah* have led others to [unjustly] speak negatively about it. Because of this, it is important to clarify the established *usūl* of the *Salaf* and present them to the people.

From the works [that have clarified these *usūl*] is the book prepared by our brother Ahmad Muhammad as-Sādiq an-Najjār, entitled: *Enlightening the Successor about the Principles (Usūl) which if Opposed Renders a Person Outside of the Salafi Manhaj.* It is a beneficial research paper. He focused on the universal *usūl* mentioned by the mountains of knowledge (i.e. erudite scholars) in their books, so one should understand them as they are without distorting their meanings. The only thing that has prevented many people from truly benefitting from the truth is distortion of the truth and understanding it in a way contrary to its intended meaning.

I ask Allāh to benefit the people with this research, unite the hearts upon Guidance and the Sunnah, and to safeguard us and the Muslims from innovations and evil trials, both apparent and hidden.

And Allāh is behind the intention. May Allāh extol our Prophet Muhammad, his family, his Companions, and those who follow them in goodness until the Day of Judgment.

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Introduction

Verily all praise is for Allāh, we praise Him and seek His aid and ask for His forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allāh from the evils of ourselves and our evils actions. Whomever Allāh guides there is none who can misguide him, and whomever Allāh leaves to stray there is none who can guide him. I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped except Allāh alone, having no partner, and I bear witness that Muhammad ﷺ is His slave and His Messenger.

﴿ يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ ٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ حَقَّ تُقَاتِهِۦ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُم مُّسْلِمُونَ ﴾

O you who have believed, fear Allāh as He should be feared and do not die except as Muslims (in submission to Him).

{Āli-Imrān (3): 102}

﴿ يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ ٱتَّقُوا۟ رَبَّكُمُ ٱلَّذِى خَلَقَكُم مِّن نَّفْسٍ وَٰحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَآءً ۚ وَٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ ٱلَّذِى تَسَآءَلُونَ بِهِۦ وَٱلْأَرْحَامَ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا ﴾

O mankind! Have fear of your Lord, the One who created you from a single soul, from that soul He created its mate, and through them He spread countless men and women. Fear Allāh, through whom you demand your mutual rights. Beware of severing the ties of kinship; surely Allāh is Ever Watchful over you.

{an-Nisā (4): 1}

﴿ يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ ٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ وَقُولُوا۟ قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا • يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَـٰلَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ ۗ وَمَن يُطِعِ ٱللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُۥ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا ﴾

O you who have believed, fear Allāh and speak words of appropriate justice. He will amend for you your deeds and forgive your sins. And whoever obeys Allāh and His Messenger has certainly attained a great attainment.

{al-Ahzāb (33): 70-71}

To proceed:

The *Salaf* ﷺ were chosen by Allāh ﷻ to uphold His religion and preserve His legislation (*Sharī'ah*) with the sound belief and methodology He bestowed upon them. Allāh, the All Mighty, has praised them in numerous *āyāt* in His Book, has clarified their virtues and praised their way. In fact, Allāh,

the All Mighty, has warned the one who opposes their guidance and deviates from their way, due to the excellence and superiority of the *Salaf*. Accordingly, affiliation to the *Salaf* is an honourable, legislated affiliation containing no harm.

We live in a time of relentless trials and tribulations, one succeeding another. They leave behind confusion, such that good is viewed as evil and evil viewed as good. Since there are those who recognise that the Muslims love the *Salaf* and give them deference, some of them ascribe themselves to the *Salaf* even though they do not follow their methodology. In fact, there are those who innovate and seek to promote their heresy among the masses by ascribing their innovation to the *Salaf* and claiming *Salafiyyah*.

The methodologies of those who ascribe themselves to *Salafiyyah* have become numerous to the extent that some of them say: "Whose *Salafiyyah* do you call to? Is it the *Salafiyyah* of so-and-so? Or the *Salafiyyah* of so-and-so?!!" You even now hear of "*Salafiyyah Jihādiyyah*" and "*Salafiyyah 'Ilmiyyah*" etc. In contrast to them are groups who have become confused in this issue and reject this honourable, legislated title. With others, *Salafiyyah* is directly attached to anyone who claims that he is *Salafi*. Hence, if the one who ascribes himself to *Salafiyyah* makes an error, they ascribe his mistake to *Salafiyyah* and, consequently, the *Salafi Manhaj* is incorrect according to them.

By Allāh, this speech of theirs is far from the truth. *Salafiyyah* is, in fact, a methodology that consists of *usūl*

(principles) that are firmly built upon the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of His Messenger ﷺ. The mistake of those who ascribe themselves to *Salafiyyah* must not be attributed to the methodology of the *Salaf* because that would be transgression and falsehood. It is not the case that everyone who claims *Salafiyyah* is actually a *Salafi.*

This is even clearer in the case of Islām: are the mistakes of individual Muslims to be used to vilify the Islām which Allāh revealed to His Prophet ﷺ? Furthermore is everyone who claims to be a Muslim actually a Muslim? The answer is an emphatic "no". Another troubling affair in these times is that there are people who are very liberal in ascribing people to *Salafiyyah*, to the extent that some say: "All the Islamic groups today are *Salafi*, and the differing between them is only due to *ijtihād* (interpretive matters) in subsidiary issues!" In contrast are those who have very little knowledge. They hastily take the one who considers himself Salafi outside the fold of *Salafiyyah* due to issues that do not warrant such a ruling according to the erudite scholars. Such people are heedless to the speech of the Imāms of the *Salaf*: **"Taking people outside of the Sunnah is serious".**[3] Imām ad-Dārimī said:

> Innovation is severe, and a heretic is considered evil according to Muslims. So do not be hasty in describing others as innovators until you know for certain which of the two

[3]Al-Khallāl, *as-Sunnah*, vol.2, p.373

> groups has spoken the truth and which one has spoken falsehood. How can you be hasty in ascribing a group of people to an innovation due to something that they said, and you do not know whether or not they have spoken the truth? It is not possible for you, according to your *madhab,* to say to someone from either group, "You are incorrect, and it is not as you have said." Who is more foolish and ignorant in his *madhab* than one who ascribes an innovation to a people yet he says, "We do not know if their claim is true or not"? In fact, according to his *madhab*, he is not safe from labeling a people as innovators whilst it's possible that the position of one of the two groups coincides with the truth and the Sunnah, however he labels them innovators. Furthermore, he is not safe from claiming that the truth is falsehood and the Sunnah is in fact an innovation? This is clear misguidance and significant ignorance.[4]

From here, I resolved – after seeking Allāh's aid - to clarify the *dābit* (rule) by which the *usūl* (principles) of the Imāms of the *Salaf* are known. When a person adheres to these *usūl* inwardly and outwardly, it is correct to ascribe him to the

[4] *Ar-Radd 'ala'l-Jahmiyyah*, p.193

Salaf. However, if an individual opposes these *usūl*, it indicates that his ascription to the *Salaf as-Sāli*h is pretentious.

The plan of action included in this study is split into two sections:

> **The First Section:** The *dābit* (rule) by which the Imāms of the *Salaf* were distinguished from others, as well as the ruling of the one who opposes these *usūl* (principles).
>
> **The Second Section:** The ruling on a specific person who opposes a principle from the *usūl* (principles) of the *Salaf*.

And I ask Allāh that He makes my actions sincerely and solely seeking His Glorious Face, that He benefits the Muslims with this work, and that He makes this a deed that is stored for me on the Day of Reckoning.



The First Section

THE *DĀBIT* (RULE) BY WHICH THE IMĀMS OF THE *SALAF* WERE DISTINGUISHED FROM OTHERS, AS WELL AS THE RULING OF THE ONE WHO OPPOSES THESE *USŪL*

The Imāms of the *Salaf*, i.e. the Companions and those who followed them in goodness, unanimously agreed upon certain *usūl*. They censured the one who opposed them, labelled him as an innovator, and expelled him from the realm of the people of the Sunnah. These *usūl* by which the Imāms of the *Salaf* were distinguished from the people of desires are primarily based on the following two items:

FIRST: The primary sources of Islamic legislation, which are: the Qur'ān, the Sunnah, and Ijmā' (Scholarly Consensus). The Imāms of the *Salaf* took their religion from the Qur'ān, the Sunnah and Ijmā'; they did not take their creed from other than these three primary sources of Islamic legislation, nor did they give precedence over them to the speech of anyone. They deemed everything else (e.g. statements of scholars, rationale, etc.) as secondary to revelation, not vice versa. Accordingly, anyone who opposes the *Salaf* in regard to these primary sources of Islamic legislation is not considered to be from the *Salaf*, nor has he followed their guidance. He is

deemed to be from the people of desires and innovation because the people of innovation actually rely on other than these primary sources; they rely on their intellects, opinions and their inclinations. Thereafter, if they see a proof from the Qur'ān, Sunnah or Ijmā' that agrees with their stance, they refer to it; if not, they ignore it.

This principle, in reality, is the criterion between *Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah* and the people of innovation and division.

In establishing this tremendous principle, Abu'l-Qāsim at-Taymī ﵀ said:

> **Some of the '*Ulama* have said, '*Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah* did not go beyond the Qur'ān, Sunnah and Ijmā' of the *Salaf as-Sālih*, nor did they pursue ambiguities seeking discord. Instead, they only followed the Companions, their students (*Tābi'een*) and that which the Muslims have agreed upon in speech and action.**[5]

Abu'l-'Abbās Ibn Taymiyyah ﵀ also said, "He whose primary sources of Islamic legislation are the Qur'ān, the Sunnah, and Ijmā' is from *Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah*." He also said,

> It is upon every believer to avoid speaking about the religion unless what he says is consistent with what the Messenger ﷺ came with. He must also avoid putting himself before

[5] Quoted by Ibn Taymiyyah in *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, vol.3, p.346

the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ. Instead, he looks at what the Messenger ﷺ has said and then makes his speech in conformity with it. He ensures that his knowledge is consistent with the Messenger's ﷺ command. This was the way of the Companions, as well as those who treaded their path after them and the Imāms of the Muslims. There was not a single one from among them that contradicted the texts with his intellect, nor did they establish a religion other than that which the Messenger ﷺ brought. If a person wants to know something about the religion or to speak about it, he should firstly look into what Allāh and His Messenger ﷺ have said. This is what he learns from, bases his speech on, investigates, reflects upon and uses as a proof. This is the *asl* (fundamental principle) of *Ahlus Sunnah.* The people of innovation, in actuality, do not rely on what they received from the Messenger ﷺ, rather they depend upon their opinions and inclinations. If they find that the Sunnah coincides with their opinion they accept it, and if not, they ignore it. If their opinion opposes the Sunnah, they shun it in the name of *tafweedh*[6], or they distort it through *ta'weel*

[6] [Editor's Note]: *Tafweedh*, in this context, refers to merely affirming the wording of what Allāh says about His Divine Attributes, while claiming that

> (false interpretations). This is the criterion between the people of īmān and the Sunnah and the people of hypocrisy and innovation.[7]

The intended meaning of the Ijmā' here is: what the first three virtuous generations were in agreement upon: the Companions, the *Tābi'een* and their students, since it is possible to ascertain their consensus, and it is their understanding that is given weight and consideration. As it relates to determining the Ijmā' that is possible to ascertain, Imām Ibn Taymiyyah ﵀ said,

> The path of *Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah* is following the Prophetic traditions of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ outwardly and inwardly, following the path of the *Muhājireen* and the *Ansār* and following the advice of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ when he said, "*Upon you all is my Sunnah, and the Sunnah of the Rightly Guided Caliphs after me, hold on tightly to it and bite onto it with your molars; and beware of newly invented matters for indeed every newly invented*

only Allāh knows what those words mean. This is in opposition to the creed of *Ahlus-Sunnah*. As for the *Salaf*, they confirmed the meaning of Allāh's Divine Attributes but consigned the *kayfiyyah* (modality) of those Divine Attributes to Allāh.

[7] *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, vol.13, pp.62-63

matter is an innovation and every innovation is misguidance.”[8]

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[8] Ahmad, Musnad, p.1216, hadīth nos.17272, 17274; Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan, Kitāb us-Sunnah*, Chapter: ‘Adherence to the Sunnah’, p.619, hadīth no.4607; at-Tirmidhī, *Jāmi’, Kitāb ul-’Ilm* from Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ Chapter: ‘What Has Arrived Regarding Taking from the Sunnah and Staying Away from Innovation’, p.603, hadīth no.2686. Tirmidhī stated: “The hadīth is hasan sahih”. Also reported by Ibn Mājah, *Sunan, Kitāb us-Sunnah*, Chapter: ‘Following the Sunnah of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs’, p.6, hadīth nos.42-43; Ibn Hibbān, *Sahih*, Chapter: ‘Mention of the Description of the Firqat un-Nājiyah Among the Sects Which Divided the Ummah of al-Mustafā’, vol.1, p.178, hadīth no.205 – all of them via ’AbdurRahmān bin ’Amru as-Sulamī from al-’Irbād.

A number of people transmitted the narrations of ’AbdurRahmān as-Sulamī [i.e. he had several students]. Adh-Dhahabī said that he is “*Sadūq*” (truthful) (*al-Kāshif*, vol.2, p.179). As for Ibn Hajr, he said that as-as-Sulamī is “*Maqbūl* (acceptable) (*at-Taqreeb*, p.408). [However as-Sulamī was not the only one to narrate the hadīth from al-’Irbād.] It was also reported by Yahyā bin Abi’l-Mutā’ in Sunan Ibn Mājah via the route of ’Abdullāh bin Dhakwān from al-Waleed bin Muslim who said: ’Abdullāh bin al-’Alā’ narrated to us, that Yahyā bin Abi’l-Mutā’ narrated to me and said “I heard al-’Irbād say it”. Al-Hāfidh stated in *at-Taqreeb*, p.692 in regards to Yahyā: “*Sadūq*”. Ibn Rajab stated with regards to this chain of transmission within *Jāmi’ ul-’Ulūm wa’l-Hikam*, pp.487-488:

> This chain is apparently good and connected, its narrators are trustworthy and well known, and Yahyā clearly stated that he had heard the narration [directly from al-’Irbād]. Based on this narration, al-Bukhārī mentioned in his *Tārīkh* that Yahyā bin Abi’l-Mutā’ was from amongst those who directly heard from al-’Irbād. However the Huffādh of Shām rejected that. They said, “Yahyā bin Abi’l-Mutā’ did not hear from al-’Irbād nor did he ever meet him so this narration is incorrect. From those who mentioned that were Abū Zur’ah ad-Dimashqi who noted that Duhāym had the same opinion, and they were more knowledgeable of their Shaykhs than others. Al-Bukhārī ﵀ made some mistakes in his *Tārīkh* in regards to the reports of the people of Shām.

They know that the most truthful speech is the speech of Allāh, and the best guidance is the guidance of Muhammad ﷺ. They give precedence to the Speech of Allāh over the speech of others, and they give precedence to the guidance of Muhammad ﷺ over the guidance of everyone else. Thus, they have been labelled *'Ahl ul-Kitāb was-Sunnah'*. They

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I say: What Al-Bukhārī mentioned is what should be considered, as he established that Yahyā heard from Al-'Irbād based on the authenticity of this chain of transmission. It is as Ibn Rajab stated: "The *isnād* is good and appears to be connected." al-Hākim graded this chain of transmission authentic in *al-Mustadrak*, vol.1, p.97, and said, "Besides 'AbdurRahmān bin 'Amru, there are three other trustworthy narrators [that narrated this same hadīth on the authority of al-'Irbād], from them Yahyā bin Abi'l-Mutā'." Al-Fasawī also agreed with al-Bukhārī in his book *Al-Ma'rifah wa't-Tārīkh*, vol.2, p.200. He said, "Yahyā bin Abi'l-Mutā' heard 'Irbād narrate this hadīth." Likewise, Ibn Abī Hātim agreed with him as is found in *al-Jarh wa't-Ta'deel*, vol.9, p.192.

Hujr bin Hajr also narrated this hadīth [on the authority of al-'Irbād] as is found in the Sunan of Abū Dāwūd, p.291, hadīth no.4607. Even though this narration is questionable, it was graded *sahih* by al-Albānī in his notes of Sunan Abū Dawūd.

The hadīth also has a second abridged route which was reported by 'Īsā bin Khālid from Abu'l-Yamān from Ismā'eel bin 'Ayyāsh from Artāh bin al-Mundhir from al-Muhāsir bin Habeeb from al-'Irbād.

The hadīth of al-'Irbād has been graded *sahih* or *hasan* by several scholars. Here are some of their statements:

- At-Tirmidhī: "The hadīth is *hasan sahih*"
- Abū Ismā'īl al-Harawī, *Dhamm ul-Kalām*, vol.3, p.122: "this is from the good hadīth of the people of Shām..."
- Al-Baghawī: "The hadīth is *hasan*"
- Al-Hākim, *al-Mustadrak*, vol.1, p.98: "This hadīth is *sahih,* al-hamdu lillāh".
- Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, vol.18, p.190: "This hadīth is *sahih*, collected in the Sunan".

> have also been called *'the people of al-Jamā'ah'* because the *Jamā'ah* is: to unite, as opposed to dividing. Ijmā' is: the third principle upon which knowledge and the religion rely.
>
> By these three *usūl* [i.e. the Qur'ān, the Sunnah and Ijmā'], *Ahlus-Sunnah* evaluate everyone's speech and actions, internal and external, connected to the religion. The Ijmā' which is possible to ascertain is that which the *Salaf as-Sālih* concurred upon, then after them came much differing and the Ummah spread [to many geographic regions].[9]

The Imāms of the *Salaf* clarified that the foundation upon which the *Jamā'ah* is built is adhering to what the Companions were upon ﷺ.[10] Whoever doesn't take from them has deviated and innovated.

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[9] *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, vol.3, p.157

[10] Imām Ibn Taymiyyah said:

> It is known by necessity to whoever ponders over the Qur'ān, Sunnah and the consensus of *Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah*, that the best generation of this Ummah, in actions, statements, beliefs and all other virtues: is the first generation, then those who followed them and then those who followed them as has been verified from the Prophet ﷺ in several hadīth. They are better than the *latter generations* in every respect: knowledge, action, īmān, intelligence, *Deen*, clarifying [the religion] and worship, and they take worthier of clarifying what some may find ambiguous. This is not opposed except by one who is arrogant towards that which is known in the *Deen* of Islām by necessity and Allāh knowing his condition, left him astray. 'Abdullāh bin

Imām Ahmad ﷺ said,

> **The *usūl* of the Sunnah according to us are clinging on tightly to that which the Companions of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ were upon, following them and abandoning innovation.**[11]

Imām al-Barbahārī ﷺ said,[12]

Mas'ūd ﷺ said: "Whoever of you wants to follow someone as an example then let him follow those who have died, as the ones who are alive are not safe from tribulation" – and they are the Companions of Muhammad ﷺ. They possess the most righteous hearts from those of the Ummah, have deeper knowledge, the least burden and are a people chosen by Allāh to accompany His Prophet ﷺ and establish His *Deen*. So give them their due right and tenaciously hold firm to their guidance, for they were upon straight guidance.

Others said: "Upon you are the narrations of those who have preceded, for they came with what is sufficient and what cures ignorance and doubts, no good occurred after them which they did not know." The Prophet ﷺ said: "*No time will come except that what comes after it will be worse than it, until you meet your Lord.*" How excellent is the statement of ash-Shāfi'ī ﷺ in his *Risālah*: "They [the Salaf] are above us in every knowledge, intelligence, Deen and virtue. Every situation in which knowledge is attained, or guidance is comprehended, then their opinion is better for us than our opinion for ourselves."

Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, vol.4, pp.157-158

[11] *Usūl_us-Sunnah* of Imām Ahmad, as found within the book *'Aqā'id us-Salaf*, p.19

[12] He is Abū Muhammad al-Hasan bin 'Ali al-Barbahārī, one of the Imāms and 'Ārifeen, a precise memoriser of *usūl* and one of the trustworthy believers. Refer to Ibn Abī Ya'lā, *Tabaqāt ul-Hanābilah*, vol.3, pp.36-80.

> **The foundation upon which the *Jamā'ah* is built is the Companions of Muhammad ﷺ. They are *Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah*, so whoever does not take from them has strayed and innovated. Every innovation is misguidance, and misguidance and its people are in the fire.**[13]

Imām Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله said: **"It is known that the sign of the people of innovation is their failure to follow the *Salaf*."**[14]

<u>SECONDLY:</u>[15] The unambiguous issues, both creedal and practical,[16] are called *usūl* by the scholars of the Sunnah due to the fact that they coincide with the Qur'ān, the Sunnah and Ijmā'. Hence, whoever opposes an *asl* (principle) from the well-known *usūl* that are in accordance to the Book, the Sunnah and *Ijmā'* has left the guidance of the *Salaf*, and cannot be ascribed to them.

The reason why this ruling [i.e. a person being ascribed to innovation] is connected to the *usūl* is that the matters that are considered *usūl* are so clearly delineated in the Qur'ān

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[13] Al-Barbahārī, *Sharhus-Sunnah*, p.59

[14] *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, vol.4, p.155

[15] [Editor's Note]: The second category of those *usūl* by which the Imāms of the *Salaf* were distinguished from the people of desires

[16] The truth is that the unambiguous issues from each category [i.e. both creedal and practical] are deemed to be *usūl*, whereas the more subtle issues are called *furoo'* (subsidiary matters).

and Sunnah that they are almost always known by those who seek knowledge of the Sunnah. These *usūl* are crystal clear in the Qur'ān, they are mentioned in the Sunnah abundantly, and there is Ijmā' among the *Salaf* regarding them. The fact that they are deemed to be the *usūl* of the religion necessitates that they are from the most important matters of the religion, and that Allāh and His Messenger have clarified them to the extent that there is no room for excuse [not to know them]. Knowing these *usūl* are from the most significant matters that the Messenger ﷺ articulately conveyed and clarified to the people, and from the greatest things that Allāh will use as a proof against His slaves.[17]

The aforementioned is based on the *asl* (principle) that Allāh has explicitly mentioned everything that protects from destruction in a manner that leaves no room for excuse.[18]

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[17] See Ibn Taymiyyah, *Dar' Ta'ārud al-'Aql wa'n-Naql*, vol.2, p.26

[18] Abu'l-'Abbās bin Taymiyyah stated when explaining that clear matters in the Book and Sunnah are [to be taken as] clear:

> However, both this and that [Ibn Taymiyyah is referring to mistakes made due to taking a position based on abrogated texts as well as errors that are a result of misunderstanding texts] could occur in ambiguous and detailed issues via ijtihād from its proper people, who have exerted themselves to its study and have gone to great lengths to seek the truth and researching how to arrive at it. Their ability to follow the texts and arrive at the truth overweighs any shortcomings that emerge from them. This is similar to what occurred among some of the Companions in regards to the issue of divorce, inheritance etc. Yet they did not have such [divergent views] in regards to the clear matters as their clarification from Allāh's Messenger ﷺ was apparent among them.

Allāh the Most High said:

﴿ وَمَا كَانَ ٱللَّهُ لِيُضِلَّ قَوْمًۢا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَىٰهُمْ حَتَّىٰ يُبَيِّنَ لَهُم مَّا يَتَّقُونَ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَىْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴾

And Allāh will never lead a people astray after He has guided them until He makes clear to them what they should avoid.

{at-Taubah (9): 115}

Based on this, the innovation that renders someone a person of desires is the one that contravenes the Book, the Sunnah, and Ijmā', provided that its violation [of those three *usūl]* is well-known among those knowledgeable of the Sunnah. Whoever falls into this type of heresy is classified as a person of innovation.

Examples of this include: rejecting Allāh's [Divine] Names or Attributes, denial of Allāh's Decree, approval of rebelling against the *Sharī'ah* of the Prophet ﷺ, excessiveness in the religion by deifying a man, rebelling against the leaders of the Muslims, rejecting the legitimacy of wiping over leather socks [during *wudhu*], etc.[19]

The Imām Sufyān bin 'Uyaynah[20] said,

Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, vol.13, pp.64-65

[19] See *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, vol.28, pp.105-106

[20] He is Sufyān bin 'Uyaynah bin Abī 'Imrān, Maymūn al-Hilālī, Abū Muhammad al-Kūfī. Ash-Shāfi'ī said about him: **"I have not seen anyone excel in issuing rulings like him."** He was born in 107 AH and died in 198 AH. See al-Mizzī, *Tahdheeb ul-Kamāl*, vol.3, pp. 223-228.

> **The Sunnah is ten [matters]. Whoever affirms them has attained the Sunnah, and whoever abandons anything from them has abandoned the Sunnah: giving precedence to Abu Bakr and 'Umar; the *Haud* (pool); the intercession; the scales; the *Sirāt* (the bridge over the Hellfire); īmān being comprised of speech and action; the Qur'ān being the Speech of Allāh; the punishment of the grave; resurrection on the Day of Judgment; and not testifying that any Muslim is a martyr.**[21]

Imām Ali al-Madīnī[22] ﷺ said, "**If a quality of the binding Sunnah is abandoned in speech or belief, it disqualifies a person from being from the people of the Sunnah...**" He then mentioned several binding *usūl* of *Ahlus-Sunnah*.[23]

Imām Ibn Qutaybah ﷺ said,

> **All of the people of hadīth agree that: whatever Allāh wills occurs and whatever He does not will, does not occur; Allāh is the Creator of good and evil; the Qur'ān is the uncreated Speech of Allāh; Allāh will be**

[21] Al-Lālikā'ī, *Sharh Usūl I'tiqād Ahlus-Sunnah*, vol.2, p.175

[22] He is 'Ali bin 'Abdullāh bin Ja'far as-Sa'dī al-Madīnī, Abu'l-Hasan. Al-Bukhārī said: "I did not see myself as being insignificant in front of anyone except 'Ali al-Madīnī." He was born in 161 AH and died in 234 AH. See al-Mizzī, *Tahdheeb ul-Kamāl*, vol.5, pp. 269-277.

[23] Al-Lālikā'ī, *Sharh Usūl I'tiqād Ahlus-Sunnah*, vol.2, p.185

> **seen on the Day of Judgement; precedence is given to the two Shaykhs (i.e. Abu Bakr and 'Umar); and the belief in the punishment of the grave. They do not differ regarding these usūl. Whoever separates from the people of hadīth in any of these usūl is ostracized by them, detested, declared an innovator, and abandoned.**[24]

These Imāms have mentioned several *usūl* (principles) of *Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah*. Whoever opposes these *usūl* or abandons any of them is considered to be outside of the fold of the Sunnah and not from its people. Each one of the aforementioned principles mentioned by those Imāms is a matter of Ijmā' (consensus) and has clear evidences from the Qur'ān and Sunnah.

Imām Ibn Taymiyyah ﷺ said,

> **Anyone who, without a valid excuse, opposes that which is clear in the Qur'ān and widespread in the Sunnah, or what the *Salaf* of the Ummah agreed upon, is to be treated the way that the people of innovation are treated.**[25]

[24] *Ta'weel Mukhtalif al- Hadīth*, p.64
[25] *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, vol.24, p.172

He also said ﷺ,

> **The innovation of those who oppose the clear truth from the Book and the Sunnah is well known among the majority of the Ummah. Their misguidance is recognised, they do not have a good reputation nor are they generally accepted [among the people], such as the Khawārij, Rāfidah, Qadarīyyah etc. As for the people of knowledge and the Sunnah, they differ in subtle issues that the majority of the people are unaware of.**[26]

Ibn Taymiyyah ﷺ further said,

> **The innovation that renders an individual from the people of desires is one that is well known among the people of knowledge of the Sunnah to be a practice that is contrary to the Book and the Sunnah, such as the innovations of the Khawārij, Rāfidah, Qadariyyah and the Murjiah.**[27]

Accordingly, not everyone who errs in an issue is to be considered a deviant. Rather, the measuring stick is whether or not the issue one has erred in is an *asl* (principle) from the *usūl* of *Ahlus-Sunnah.*

[26] *Al-Īmān*, p.281

[27] *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, vol.35, p.414; See vol.28, pp.105, 205.

Imām Ahmad was asked about the one who says, "Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Ali and then 'Uthmān". He replied, "This statement does not please me." It was said to him, "Should we say [that the one who says this is] an innovator?" Ahmad replied, "I despise describing him as a severe innovator." It was said to him, "So what about the one who says, 'Abū Bakr, 'Umar and 'Ali', then remains silent without giving precedence to anyone?" He said, "This statement does not please me either." It was said to him, "Should we say [that the one who says this is] an innovator?" Ahmad said, "This statement does not please me."[28]

Regarding who is more virtuous, 'Uthmān or 'Ali ﷺ, Ibn Taymiyyah ﷺ said,

This matter is not from the *usūl* that renders the one who errs in it a deviant according to the majority of *Ahlus-Sunnah*. However, the matter that renders the one who errs in it a deviant is concerning the *Khilāfah*.[29]

[28] Relayed by al-Khallāl in *as-Sunnah*, vol.1, p.378
[29] *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, vol.3, p.153

Here Imām Ibn Taymiyyah is clarifying that the issue that renders one to be a deviant is that which was agreed upon by the *Salaf* and is well known to coincide with the Book and the Sunnah, such as the issue of giving precedence to the *Khilāfah* of Abū Bakr, ’Umar, ’Uthmān, and then ’Ali [in that order] ﷺ. As for who is more virtuous, ’Uthmān or ’Ali ﷺ, this is not from the *usūl* because the *Salaf* differed in this issue. Hence, the Imāms of Islām are in agreement that anyone who opposes the *usūl* without a valid excuse is considered to be an innovator, contrary to one who disputes in matters of *ijtihād* (interpretive matters), which do not reach the level of *usūl.* Abu’l-Qāsim at-Taymī said,

> **Some of the scholars have said regarding issues of *ijtihād* and subsidiary religious matters that they differ over: a person does not become an innovator because of them, nor is he blameworthy or facing any threat [of punishment in the Hereafter].**[30]

Ash-Shātibī ﷺ says concerning the rule of blameworthy separation, namely any separation that results from a differing in a universal principle or a foundation of the *Sharī’ah.* It is not that which results from differing in subsidiary issues (*Juz’iyyāt)*[31] because the Companions

[29] *Al-Hujjah fī Bayān il-Mahajjah*, vol.2, p.411
[31] [Editor’s Note]: *Juz‘i* is an individual category within a genus. It refers to a specific and particular evidence within a general evidence.

themselves differed in *ijtihād* issues (interpretive matters). Concerning *Hadīth al-Iftirāq*[32], Ash-Shātibī said,

> **This is because these groups only become sectarian groups due to their differing from the Saved Sect in a universal principle of the religion, or a foundation of the *Sharī'ah*, not because they differed in a subsidiary issue. Differing in subsidiary issues and anomalous branches does not result in sectarian strife. Separation only occurs when a universal principle is violated, because universal principles consist of several subsidiary issues and are not specific to one aspect of the religion to the exclusion of others.**[33]

Ash-Shātibī ﷺ also said concerning the *Hadīth al-Iftirāq*:

> It is possible that the word 'separation' mentioned in the hadīth is all-inclusive of every type of separation. However, it could also refer to a specific form of separation and not all types; both are possible. It is similar to the term 'slave' which, when mentioned

[32] [Editor's Note]: This refers to the hadīth in which the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: *"The Jews split into seventy-one sects, or seventy-two sects, and the Christians similarly, and my Ummah will split into seventy-three sects."* Collected by at-Tirmidhī and others and graded sound by several scholars of hadīth.

[33] *Al-I'tisām*, vol.2, pp.177-178

> without any qualification, does not indicate whether the slave is a believer or a disbeliever. Therefore, it is incorrect to believe that 'separation' in this hadīth is without restriction, whereby all forms of separation are included. If so, it would necessitate that those who differ in subsidiary issues are included in the wording of this hadīth, and this is false by consensus.
>
> Differing since the time of the Companions رضي الله عنهم, up until now, is still occurring in *ijtihād* issues. Differing first occurred in the time of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, and continued during the era of the Companions, then during the time of the *Tābi'een*. None of them found this [i.e. the presence of varying opinions] to be problematic. Those who came after the Companions emulated them in their differing and it broadened [to the point that *mathāhib* were formed]. So how is it possible that the differing and separation within the *mathāhib* is included in what the hadīth states?!

Hence, the intended meaning is a specific type of separation, even though the wording of the hadīth does not explicitly state that. However, there are *āyāt* that indicate this meaning, such as the saying of Allāh, the Exalted:

﴿ وَلَا تَكُونُوا۟ مِنَ ٱلْمُشْرِكِينَ • مِنَ ٱلَّذِينَ فَرَّقُوا۟ دِينَهُمْ وَكَانُوا۟ شِيَعًا ۖ كُلُّ حِزْبٍۭ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ فَرِحُونَ ﴾

And do not be like the disbelievers those who separated their religion and became groups. Each sect rejoicing regarding what is with them.

{ar-Room (30): 31-32}

Allāh also said:

﴿ إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ فَرَّقُوا۟ دِينَهُمْ وَكَانُوا۟ شِيَعًا لَّسْتَ مِنْهُمْ فِى شَىْءٍ ۚ إِنَّمَآ أَمْرُهُمْ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُهُم بِمَا كَانُوا۟ يَفْعَلُونَ ﴾

Indeed, those who have divided their religion and become sects – you, [O Muhammad], are not [associated] with them in anything. Their affair is only [left] to Allāh; then He will inform them about what they used to do.

{al-An'ām (6): 159}

These and other similar āyāt indicate that the [blameworthy] separation is that which has caused them to become sects. "Becoming sects" refers to them being groups that have separated from one another, they are void of unity, mutual assistance and support. Islām is one, and its command is one,

so it necessitates that its ruling is on complete unity and not on separation or differing.[34]

Based on the information that has preceded, the *dawābit* (rules) by which something is deemed an *asl* (principle) of the *Salaf's* methodology become clear. Opposition to any of those *usūl* is innovation, and the one who opposes any of them without a valid excuse is deemed to be an innovator who has left the way of the *Salaf*, which we have been instructed to follow.



[34] *Al-I'tisām*, vol.1, pp.161-162

The Second Section

THE RULING ON A SPECIFIC PERSON WHO OPPOSES A PRINCIPLE FROM THE USŪL OF THE SALAF

The ruling established in the previous section, namely that anyone who opposes a principle from the *usūl* of *Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah* has left the guidance of the *Salaf as-Sālih* and has become from the people of innovation, is considered to be a general, absolute ruling. However, applying this ruling to a specific individual requires more detail, for not everyone who falls into an innovation is deemed to be an innovator. For example, a man may be an advocate of the *Salaf*, and follow their methodology of *istidlāl* (the pursuit of legal evidence). If such a person mistakenly does something that opposes the *usūl* of the *Salaf* without having allegiance and disavowal on this issue, he is not considered to have left *Salafiyyah* due to that mistake, nor is he an innovator. Rather it is said, 'His position coincides with the people of innovation in this or that', in order to highlight the weakness of his viewpoint. It is not to be said that he resembles the people of innovation, nor is he to be treated like them. However, if the conditions of declaring him an innovator have been met and there is nothing to prevent them from

being applied to him, he is an innovator and takes their ruling.

It was said to Abū 'Abdillāh Ahmad bin Hanbal ﷺ,

> **A man who is well versed in hadīth, from whom hadīth is documented said, "Whosoever testifies that the ten are in Paradise is an innovator." Imām Ahmad was disturbed by this and said, "Perhaps he is ignorant and he does not know."**[35]

Imām Ahmad ﷺ was also asked,

> **What do you say about the one who does not affirm the *khilāfah* of Ali?" He replied, "What an evil statement this is." Ahmad bin al-Hasan added to this narration on the authority of Bakr, from his father, who said, "Is he considered to be from the people of the Sunnah?" Imām Ahmad said, "I would not dare remove him from the Sunnah; he interpreted and erred.**[36]

Ahmad bin Munī' al-Baghawī ﷺ said,

> **Whomsoever claims that the Qur'ān is created is a *Jahmī*. As for one who does not take a position, if he is someone who does not comprehend [the details of Islamic Law]**

[35] Relayed by al-Khallāl in *as-Sunnah*, vol.1, p.369
[36] Ibid., vol.1, p.428

> **such as grocers, women and children, he should not be criticised and should, instead, be taught.**[37]

Imām Ibn Taymiyyah ﷺ said, in an explanation of who an 'innovator' is,

> If they do not make their innovation one by which they determine their allegiance and enmity, thereby separating from the Muslim *jamā'ah*, [the innovation] is deemed to be a mistake, and Allāh forgives the believers for these types of mistakes. Many of the *Salaf* and the Imāms of the Ummah fell into things of this nature. They took positions out of *ijtihād* (interpretive matters) that are in opposition to what is firmly established in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. **This is contrary to the one who has allegiance to those who agree with him, but enmity towards those who oppose him. He divides the Muslims, declaring those who differ with him in issues of opinion and *ijtihād* to be disbelievers and deviants and making it permissible to fight them, as opposed to those who agree with him. These**

[37] Mentioned by Abu'l-Qāsim at-Taymī in his book *al-Hujjah fī Bayān il-Mahajjah*, vol.2, p.424

> **are from the people of separation and differing.**[38]

Ibn Taymiyyah also said when clarifying that the proof must reach an individual before declaring him to be an innovator,

> **An Imām of the past may have erred in an issue, but he is pardoned because the evidence of his error had not reached him. However, if the proof has reached someone, he will not be pardoned like the first person. Accordingly, if someone rejects the ahādīth regarding the punishment of the grave or other similar narrations when they reach him, he is to be declared an innovator. However, Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها and others like her who did not know that the dead hear in their graves are not to be declared innovators. This is a tremendous principle so ponder over it, for indeed it is beneficial.**[39]

Therefore, anyone whose first foundation is sound (i.e. his primary sources of Islamic legislation are the Qur'ān, the Sunnah and Ijmā'), but then falls into an innovation, is not to be declared an innovator until certain conditions have been fulfilled and there is nothing preventing their application to

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[38] *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, vol.3, p.349
[39] Ibid, vol.6, p.61

him. However, he whose deficiency is in the first foundation (i.e. primary sources of Islamic legislation) is classified an innovator without going through the aforementioned procedure. This is because he did not adhere to the Sunnah in the first place and, as such, was never considered to be from its people. Hence, you find the Imāms of the *Salaf* describing the one who adheres to the foundations of the Mu'tazilah or the Ash'arīs, for example, as a Mu'tazilī, Qadarī, or Ash'arī, etc.

The fact that there are certain conditions that must be fulfilled before declaring a person to be an innovator does not mean that we remain silent about innovation or fail to clarify its misguidance. Innovation is rejected without restriction, and people are to be warned from it without looking at the one who says it or his status. If we were to remain silent regarding innovation, Allāh's Religion would be obscure to some people and innovation would appear as a Sunnah to them. Warning against innovation does not necessitate that the one who practices it is a deviant, not until certain conditions are met and there is nothing preventing them from being applied to him. This point was previously established when discussing the one whose primary sources of Islamic legislation conforms with the Imāms of the *Salaf.*

Shaykh Muhammad bin Sālih al-'Uthaymeen ﷺ said,

> **If a mistake in *'aqidah* (creed) is in opposition to the way of the *Salaf,* it is deviance without a doubt. However, the one**

> **who adopts it is not labelled a deviant until the proof is established. If persists in his mistake and deviance even after the proof has been presented to him, he is deemed a deviant due to his opposition to the truth.**[40]

So if it is said: "Declaring someone to be a *kāfir* or a *fāsiq* (i.e. *takfeer* and *tafseeq*) is different from declaring someone to be an innovator (*tabdī'*) because *takfeer* and *tafseeq* both require the establishment of proof, but declaring someone to be an innovator does not." The response to this is as follows:

Islamic legislation does not differentiate between these issues, as all of them fall under the category of *al-wa'eed* (a threat). There is no proof for separating between them.

Applying any of these rulings to a specific person requires that specific conditions have been fulfilled and that there is nothing preventing them from being applied to him. Each of these labels, however, have rulings that apply to the one who carries that label. For example, a disbeliever is not prayed over, nor is he buried in the graveyard of the Muslims, along with other rulings that are connected to the one who deserves the title of 'disbelief'. Likewise, an innovator is punished, rebuked, and boycotted, along with other rulings pertinent to the one who deserves the title of 'innovation'.

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[40] *Kitāb ul-'Ilm*, p.135

Whatever the case may be, when a false view or belief emanates from a person, either the person is excused or he is not.

Abu'l 'Abbas bin Taymiyyah ﵀ said regarding failure to separate between the issues of *takfeer, tafseeq* and *tabdī'*,

> ...the intent here is that if a person does a repugnant action, whether it is an innovation or not, [explicitly] prohibited by the Qur'ān and Sunnah or contrary to them, he may be excused on account of *ijtihād*, a valid form of *taqleed*, or due to his inability, as I have previously mentioned...
>
> Indeed, revealed texts that comprise the threat of punishment for an evildoer, as well as the statements of the Imāms regarding *takfeer, tafseeq,* etc., do not necessarily apply to a specific person unless certain conditions have been met and there is nothing preventing them from being applied to him. In such a case, there is no difference between *usūl* and subsidiary issues as it relates to the punishment of the hereafter.
>
> The one who warrants a threat - which includes (1) the punishment of Allāh, (2) His Curse, (3) His Anger in the next life, (4) condemnation to the fire, eternally or temporarily (5) or being labelled with disbelief or *fisq* (immorality) - is included in this rule,

> whether that is due to an innovation in creed or worship, or due to immoral behaviour.
>
> The same applies to the rulings of the *Dunya* [i.e. they are not to be applied unless certain conditions have been fulfilled and there is nothing preventing them from being applied]. Jihād against the disbelievers, for example, must be preceded by the invitation [to Islām] because punishment is only for those who have received the message [but reject it outright]. Likewise, the punishment of immoral people is not carried out until the proof has been established."[41]

In summary:

A person could possibly be blameless and not declared to be an innovator due to the absence of a condition or presence of a preventative factor, even if his action or belief is reprehensible. An individual is only blameworthy if the truth has become clear to him [and he refuses to follow it], he displays negligence in his pursuit of it, or when he turns away from it due to his whims and desires, or something similar. This is based on the answer to the following question: Is a person held responsible for the dictates of a ruling before he becomes aware of it? The strongest opinion is that a person is not responsible for implementing the

[41] *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, vol.10, pp.371-372

commands and abstaining from the prohibitions of Allāh unless the proof has been established. This is due to Allāh's saying,

﴿ لِأُنذِرَكُم بِهِۦ وَمَنۢ بَلَغَ ﴾

> **... that I may warn you thereby and whomever it reaches.**
>
> ***{al-An'ām (6):19}***

And His saying,

﴿ وَمَا كُنَّا مُعَذِّبِينَ حَتَّىٰ نَبۡعَثَ رَسُولاً ﴾

> **And never would We punish until We sent a messenger.**
>
> ***{al-Isrā' (17): 15}***

And His saying,

﴿ لِئَلَّا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ حُجَّةُۢ بَعۡدَ ٱلرُّسُلِ ﴾

> **...so that mankind will have no argument against Allāh after the messengers.**
>
> ***{an-Nisā' (4): 165}***[42]

It must be recognised that not everyone who makes *ijtihād* and extracts evidences will have the ability to know the truth and come to a correct conclusion. In addition, only the person who omits a command or commits a prohibition

[42] Ibid., vol.22, pp.41-42

deserves *al-wa'eed* (to be threatened) and to be labelled an innovator, since the one who has performed *ijtihād* and sought proofs [for his position] has feared Allāh to the best of his ability and done what Allāh required of him. This is the opinion of the *Fuqahā* and the Imāms, and it is well known from the speech the *Salaf*.[43] This issue is further clarified and emphasised by the manner in which several scholars have dealt with some of *Ahlus-Sunnah* who have made mistakes in various *usūl*.

One example is Ibn Khuzaymah's mistake regarding the issue of "the image"[44]. Imam Ahmad said, **"Whosoever says that Allāh created Adam in the image of Adam is a *Jahmī*."**[45] Abu'l-'Abbās bin Taymiyyah ﷺ said regarding "the hadīth of the image", "There is no disagreement among the first three generations of the *Salaf* that the pronoun in this hadīth refers to Allāh."[46] There was Ijmā' among the *Salaf* on the issue of the image and it is well known to be in conformity to the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. Hence, it is an *asl* (foundation) from the foundations of *Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah*. Despite that fact, Imam Ibn Khuzaymah rejected this understanding of the hadīth and misinterpreted it, but the Imāms did not expel him from the *Salafi* Methodology nor did

[43] Ibid., vol.19, p.213

[44] [Editor's Note]: This refers to the hadīth collected by al Bukhārī and Muslim on the authority of Abu Hurairah who reported that the Prophet ﷺ said, "*Indeed, Allāh created Adam in his image.*"]

[45] *Tabaqāt al Hanābilah* by Ibn Abi Ya'la, vol.2 p.236

[46] *Bayān Talbees ul-Jahmiyyah*, vol.6, p.373

they label him as an innovator due to this erroneous opinion. In fact, Adh-Dhahabī said in defence of Ibn Khuzaymah,

> Ibn Khuzaymah is held in high esteem and has a lofty position in the hearts due to his knowledge, devotion and adherence to the Sunnah. He authored a large volume on *Tawheed*, but made *ta'weel* (distorted the meaning) of "the hadīth of the image". However, he who misinterprets some attributes of Allāh is to be excused. As for the *Salaf*, they did not delve into *ta'weel*... **If we were to abandon everyone who made a mistake while exercising *ijtihād* and label him an innovator, even though he possesses sound faith and is attempting to follow the truth, few of the Imāms would be safe!**[47]

The aforementioned is further emphasized by a quote Imām Ibn Taymiyyah cited concerning Abu'l-Hasan Muhammad bin 'Abdul Malik al-Karjī ash-Shāfi'ī,[48,49]

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[47] *Siyar A'lām un-Nubalā'*, vol.14, pp.374-375

[48] Muhammad bin Abdul Mālik bin 'Umar al Karji Abu'l Hasan. Ibn Sam'āni said, "He is a pious imam, scholar of fiqh, a mufti and a scholar of hadīth". He was born in 458H and died 532H. See *Shadharāt udh-Dhahab* by Ibn ul-'Imād al Hanbali, vol. 4, p.100

[49] Ibn Taymiyyah is referring to a book written by Abu'l Hasan al-Karji entitled *al-Fusūl fi'l-Usūl 'an al-A'immat il-Fahūl.* Ibn Katheer referred to the book with the title *Kitāb ul-Fusūl fī I'tiqād al-A'immat al-Fuhūl*. In the book he relays from ten Imāms of the Salaf, including the four Imams, Sufyān ath-Thawrī, Al-Awzā'ī, Ibn ul-Mubārak, Layth bin Sa'd, and Ishāq bin Rahawayh.

> **Shaykh Abu Ahmad Muhammad bin Ali al-Faqeeh al-Karjī, the Imam known as 'Al-Qassāb'[50], distorted the meanings of the *āyāt* and narrations about the deceased feeling punishment, and exhaustively defended his position in his book *Nukat al-Qur'an*. He held the opinion that a deceased person does not feel punishment or anything else the entire time he is in the *Barzakh*. We say: He is the only one to make such an interpretation and none of the Imāms followed him in that. The correct opinion in this matter is that which is held by the majority, and his isolated opinion on certain issues does not affect nor harm their levels.**[51]

I conclude with a statement of the Imām Ibn Taymiyyah ﷺ who said,

> **Anyone who, without a valid excuse, opposes that which is clear in the Qur'ān and widespread in the Sunnah, or contradicts the consensus of the *Salaf*, is to**

He relays their statements in regards to beliefs. See Ibn ul-'Imād, *Shadharāt udh-Dhahab*, vol.4, p.100.

[50] He is Muhammad bin 'Ali bin Muhammad al-Karjī, Abū Ahmad and well-known by the title "al-Qassāb" [the butcher] for his might in battle in slaying encroaching disbelieving forces.

[51] *Bayān Talbees ul-Jahmiyyah*, vol.6, pp.398-406.

> **be treated the way that the people of innovation are treated.**[52]

It is important to note, at the conclusion of this chapter, that some of the Imāms of the *Salaf* made *Tabdī'* on some who have opposed the *Salafi* methodology without considering their condition or whether or not the proof has come to them. These positions taken by some of the Imāms of the *Salaf* are considered to be specific cases, from which general rulings cannot be derived. This is due to the well-known principle: "If a general maxim has been established, it is not affected by the [seeming] contradiction of what has occurred in a specific situation", since specific cases carry multiple possibilities [i.e. there is more than one way to interpret them, and there can be reasons beyond what was narrated that led to a certain practice being implemented].

Accordingly, it is understood that these statements of the *Salaf* were made regarding individuals about whom they knew and were aware that the evidence did in fact reach them. When discussing the punishment of an innovator, Abu'l-'Abbās Ibn Taymiyyah ﷺ said,

> **When Imām Ahmad and other Imāms were questioned, many of their answers referred to people with whom they were familiar, or the response addressed a specific person whose condition was known. This is directly**

[52] *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, vol.4, pp.172-173

in line with the specific circumstantial incidents that occurred during the lifetime of the Prophet ﷺ; therefore, the same ruling is only applied to identical situations.[53]



[53] *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, vol.28, p.213

Conclusion

I praise Allāh, Glorious is He, that He granted me the success to complete this research without any strength or power of my own. I ask Him, the Exalted, to make it beneficial for the Muslims and me. I put forth great effort to publish it in a summarized manner according to the principles of the scholars. Here I would like to mention the most important principles that can be extracted from this research. They are as follows:

1. The primary sources of Islamic legislation according to the *Salaf* are: the Qur'ān, Sunnah and the Ijmā.
2. Anyone who opposes the *Salaf* regarding where Islamic legislation is derived from is from the people of desires and innovation.
3. There is no consensus *mundabit* [that is stable in its application] except in that which the first three generations were upon.
4. The foundation upon which the *Jamā'ah* is built upon is clinging tightly to that which the Companions were upon ﷺ.
5. Every single affair that is well known to be in agreement with the Qur'ān, Sunnah and Ijmā is considered an *asl* (principle) from the *usūl* of *Ahlus-Sunnah wal- Jamā'ah.*
6. Opposition to an *asl* (principle) from the *usūl* of *Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah* is an innovation.

7. Taking that which is well known to be in opposition to the Qur’ān, Sunnah and the Ijmā is an innovation.
8. The ruling of labelling someone an innovator could change when applied on a specific person if the conditions for declaring him an innovator have not been met or there is something that prevents these conditions from being applied to him.



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Glossary of terms

Usūl is the plural is *asl*. Linguistically it means something that other things are built upon. The *usūl* of *Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah* are crystal clear in the Qur'ān, they are mentioned in the Sunnah abundantly, and there is Ijmā' among the Salaf regarding them. Whoever opposes these *usūl* or abandons any of them is considered to be outside of the fold of the Sunnah and not from its people.

Asl See reference above.

Dābit is a rule.

Dawābit is the plural of dābit. See reference above.

Ijmā' means consensus and it is one of the three types of proof which are accepted in Islām.
Ijtihād is the application of scholastic diligence in order to arrive at an Islamic ruling.

Jamhūr refers to the majority of scholars.

Hadīth is the term giving to a statement, action or silent approval of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ.

Ahādīth is the plural of hadīth. See reference above.

Salaf as-Sālih is a legislative term giving to the first three generations of Muslim beginning with the Companions of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, then those who came after them (Tābi'oon) and those who came after them (Tābi' ut-Tābi'een).

Tābi'oon are those who came after the generation of the Companions. It is also sometimes written as Tābi'een.

Tābi' ut-Tābi'een are those who came after the generation of the Tābi'oon.

Muhājireen are those who migrated with the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ from Makkah to Madinah.

Ansār are those who were situated in Madinah and welcomed the Muslims into their land and enter the religion of Al Islām.

Salafi Manhaj: the methodology of understanding and implementing the religion in accordance to how the first three generations did.

Salafiyyah is descriptive term describing the da'wah of the Salaf.

Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah is a term given to those who take from the authentic Sunnah of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ and stick with the Ijma' of the Muslims.

Jamā'ah is the singular form of Jamā'āt. It means group linguistically, but is commonly used to refer to the consensus of the Muslims.

Khawārij are a deviant group whose traits first appeared in the time of the Prophet ﷺ wherein the Messenger of Allāh was distributing the spoils of war after the Battle of Hunain. A man from among the Muslims ordered the Prophet ﷺ to be just! The Khawārij are known for their rebellion against the Muslim rulers, making *takfeer* on the Muslim who commits a major sin and making the blood of Muslims permissible.

Rawāfidah are a group of extreme Shias that have various deviant beliefs. These beliefs include the Qur'ān not being completed, making takfeer of some of the Companions of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, rejecting the authentic Sunnah of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ because it has come to us via the Companions.

Qadarīyyah are a deviant group who believe that the Muslim has no control over his actions, thus he cannot be punished for that which he falls into.

Murjiah are a deviant group who believe that leaving off actions doesn't harm or affect one's faith.

Jahmīyyah are a deviant group, who reject the Sifāt (Divine Attributes) of Allāh, but affirm His names only. So they say, Allāh is The All Knowing without knowledge, or He is The All Hearing without the ability to hear, or He is The All Seeing without sight.

Mu'tazilah are a deviant group who negate the Sifāt (Divine Attributes) of Allāh. They also fell into the innovation of rejecting the predestination (al Qadr).

Ash'arīs are a deviant sect that believe the Qur'ān is created and not the uncreated speech of Allāh. They have erred in their interpretation of some of the Divine Attributes of Allāh**.**

Tafweedh refers to merely affirming the wording of what Allāh says about His Sifāt (Divine Attributes), while claiming that only Allāh knows what those words mean. This is in opposition to the creed of *Ahlus-Sunnah*.

Ta'weel Linguistically refers to any interpretation, but it's commonly used by the scholars to refer to a misinterpretation or a distortion of text.

Takfeer is to declare a Muslim to be outside the fold of Islām thus being a disbeliever in Allāh.

Tafseeq accusing a Muslim of commit lewd and immoral acts.

Tabdī' applying the ruling of innovation on a Muslim, thus making him an innovator.

Kufr means disbelief.
Fisq means lewd or immoral acts or statements.

Fāsiq is a person who commits lewd and immoral acts or statements thus exiting the obedience of Allāh.

Janāzah is the funeral prayer that is performed upon a Muslim after he/she has died.

Barzakh is the realm that a person enters after they have died and before they have been resurrected.

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